Vegetation of Australian Riverine Landscapes

BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Editors: Samantha Capon, Cassandra James and Michael Reid
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For Christy
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FOREWORD

Our appreciation of the vegetation of riverine landscapes starts from 40,000 years of indigenous knowledge passed on aurally and in pictures. Written records began less than 250 years ago with the 1804 diary of botanist Robert Brown, which alludes to the spatial and temporal dynamism of rivers and vegetation in the Hunter system through descriptions of floodplains, dry lagoons, river blockages and flood debris stranded 35 feet above the river level. Human changes, both intentional and unintentional, to catchments, basins and channels altered riparian landscapes and vegetation long before patterns and processes were described and understood. Over the past 50 years our scientific understanding of the structure and functioning of plant communities in our water landscapes has increased exponentially, building from individual studies on selected plants, rivers and catchments to a comprehensive coverage of the diversity of plant groups and riverine landscapes across the continent.

In 2016 we at last see a volume that synthesises our knowledge and management of riparian landscapes from the perspective of the vegetation. The functional importance and intrinsic values of these plants and ecosystems are captured by the three editors who have drawn together the perspectives of their 39 authors in 21 chapters to set the scene for research and management into the future.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis acvum

Still on the river glides and on it will glide, rolling its flood forever

Horace, Epistles, 65–8BC

Dr Margaret Brock
Wetland botanist and ecologist,
Honorary Associate, University of Tasmania
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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Sophie Bickford  
Central Victorian Biolinks, Kyneton, Vic.

Paul I. Boon  
Institute for Sustainability and Innovation, Victoria University, Melbourne, Vic.

Samantha J. Capon  
Australian Rivers Institute, Griffith University, Nathan, Qld.

Michelle T. Casanova  
Water Research Network, Faculty of Science & Technology, Federation University Australia, Mt Helen, Vic.

Jane A. Catford  
School of BioSciences, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic.; Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT.

Tim Cavagnaro  
School of Food, Wine and Agriculture, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA.

Matthew J. Colloff  
CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Canberra, ACT.

Ian H. Dixon  
Charles Darwin University, Casuarina, NT.

Tanya M. Doody  
CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Adelaide, SA.

Michael M. Douglas  
School of Earth and Environment, University of Western Australia, Perth, WA.

John L. Dowe  
Australian Tropical Herbarium, James Cook University, Smithfield, Qld.

George Ganf

Peter A. Gell  
Water Research Network, Federation University Australia, Mt Helen, Vic.

Amy K. George  
Department of the Environment, Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist, Darwin, NT.

Cassandra S. James  
Centre for Tropical Water & Aquatic Ecosystem Research, James Cook University, Townsville, Qld.

Kasper Johansen  
Remote Sensing Research Centre, School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Management, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Qld.

Christopher Jones  
School of BioSciences, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic.

David A. Keith  
Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Australia, Sydney, NSW.

Christine E. Kenyon  
School of Geography, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic.

Richard T. Kingsford  
Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Australia, Sydney, NSW.

Jamie B. Kirkpatrick  
 Discipline of Geography and Spatial Sciences, School of Land and Food, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tas.

Garreth Kyle  
Commonwealth Environment Research Facility
P. Sam Lake
School of Biological Sciences, Monash University, Clayton, Vic.

Stephen J. Mackay
Water Monitoring, Department of Natural Resources and Mines; and Australian Rivers Institute, Townsville, Qld.

Kaylene Morris

Lucy C. Nairn
Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Australia, Sydney, NSW.

Melissa Parsons
Riverine Landscapes Research Laboratory, Geography and Planning, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

Neil E. Pettit
Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management, The University of Western Australia, Albany, WA; and School of Natural Sciences, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, WA.

John Porter
Centre for Ecosystem Science, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Australia, Sydney, NSW; and Ecosystem Management Science, Science Division, Office of Environment and Heritage, Hurstville, NSW.

Elisa Raulings
Greening Australia, LaTrobe University, Bundoora, Vic.

Paul Reich

Michael A. Reid
Riverine Landscapes Research Laboratory, Geography and Planning, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

Jane Roberts
Institute for Applied Ecology, University of Canberra, O’Connor, ACT.

Samantha A. Setterfield
School of Earth and Environment, University of Western Australia, Perth, WA.

Nicholas J. Souter
Fauna & Flora International, Cambodia Programme, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Mark Southwell
Riverine Landscapes Research Laboratory, Geography and Planning, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

Martin Thoms
Riverine Landscapes Research Laboratory, Geography and Planning, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

Peter Vesk
School of BioSciences, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Vic.

Laura Williams
Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior, University of Minnesota, Saint Paul, MN, USA.